In Old Victoria

The articles in this series are taken from the files of the British Colonist of a century ago. Founded in 1858, it was the forerunner of today's daily newspaper, oldest in the Pacific Northwest, which continues its name.

VIOLENCE by NIGHT

Pages of the Past

IN THOSE REMOTE DAYS it was probably more truthful to say that Victoria resembled a "little bit of old England"—although predominantly Hudson's Bay officers were Scottish. But it was also distinguished for the little bit of Old Harry its citizens kicked up from time to time.

What with fist fights in the bars and on the sidewalks such common occurrences that they drew no newspaper comment, frequent stabbings and shootings—not confined wholly to the 5,000 Indians camped near and about the town—and increasinngly reported armed robberies and housebreaking, the early days were violently colorful.

In two consecutive issues of The British Colonist, in March, 1860, are reports of deviltry and dangerous crimes indicating the problems of law enforcement.

On March 28 there was a particularly brutal attack on an ex-soldier of the American army, William Woods. He was walking from Esquimalt to Victoria that day and was joined by a man who represented himself as a fellow former soldier.

It was a cold day and, when they reached the famous Half-Way House, they stopped for a couple of hot grogs.

Probably some signal or another was passed by Woods' companion, for, when they had left and walked a considerable distance along the treelined road—little better than a trail—a figure leaped at Woods from the brush and struck him down.

Woods' erstwhile companion joined in a vicious attack on the ex-soldier, who, although he fought valiantly, was kicked into unconsciousness and terribly beaten about the head and face. No doubt he was left for dead.

The highwaymen took $400 in coin from his person and drafts worth $300.

Travellers found Woods apparently dead on the trail, carried him to the Half-Way House and eventually revived him. He was able to give a good description of one of his attackers and the Victoria police instituted a search. The men were never found.

ON THE SAME DAY a storekeeper named Jacobi, whose little shop was on Government near Johnson, made an attempt to escape from pressing creditors.

Apparently they were watching him, for after he had hired a boat and slipped away into the night, five of the interested persons manned two boats and set out in pursuit.

It was dark that night, with low cloud and a good breeze. The pursuing boats separated, for it was assumed the fugitive would head for Port Townsend and they were anxious to intercept him on one tack or another.

One of the boats, however, gave up the chase off Beacon Hill and turned back toward the snugger comfort of the harbor.

It was then the disgruntled creditors encountered a darkened craft moving quietly out into the gulf. They hailed, and discovered the two boatsmen had a passenger. It was Jacobi!

By means of a bribe—of $40—following shouted bargaining between the parties—the pursuers induced the boatmen to head back to Victoria.

The sheriff was waiting on the dock and Jacobi, protesting against an alleged assault, was led off to jail.

Oddly enough, it was subsequently discovered that he had left behind in his attempted escape quite adequate assets to meet all his obligations.

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THEN ON MARCH 30 there occured a night encounter, punctuated by shooting and ending in a capture, which had the tongues wagging in every bar and at every dining table.

J. T. Pidwell was a well-known citizen, a substantial man, and he was one of the heroes of the tale.

Pidwell was awakened by the shrill cries of his alarmed children.

He hurried to their room and discovered a hulking figure in the doorway—and that the man was armed, for a shot crashed out but fortunately missed the angry householder. Pidwell grappled with the intruder.

The shot aroused a house guest, the Rev. E. Robson, who joined the struggle.

Apparently Pidwell was knocked out of the fight for a moment, for the gunman had time to recock his pistol and fire at the Rev. Mr. Robson's head at close range. Again he missed.

At this juncture Mr. Pidwell's eldest son hurled himself into the melee.

Overwhelmed finally, the robber was disarmed and bound.

Next day he was charged and committed to a higher court, and he gave his name reluctantly as Francis William Perry, then changed his mind and said it was Francis Birney. Whatever his real identity, he spent some years in prison.

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THEY WERE STILL wrangling in the Legislative Assembly, and the "old guard" was still trying to impede moves by petition to get the price of Crown lands reduced from £1 an acre to a price more in line with that in neighboring Washington and Oregon Territories.

Over the protestations of Dr. J. S. Helmcken, Dr. W. F. Tolmie and Selim Franklin whom The British Colonist's editor and founder, Amor de Cosmos, had unsuccessfully opposed in the last election—the House approved a petition to Her Majesty for a 4s 6d price for pre-empted acres.

Editorially, de Cosmos pointed to the long delays in forwarding an earlier citizens' petition. (It had been completed in July, 1859, and a reply from London had only just been received asking for Governor James Douglas' recommenations in the matter.)

If the governor was sympathetic with land reform, why hadn't his recommendations gone forward with the petition, de Cosmos asked pointedly.

That oversight guaranteed at least six to nine months delay he added.

"Our interests are certainly attended to with a vengeance," the editor observed.

Reforms were to come within the year.

In Like a Lion . . . Out Like a *Lamb*

MARCH PRELUDE

MARCH is the first month of spring when parks and gardens, woods and hedgerows begin to show their new summer finery, and in the country lambs and colts frolic about on their long, thin legs. There is a newness and freshness in the air that no other month can match.

It opens with the patronal festival of St. David, who is the only patron saint in Britain to have been born in that country. This holy man, who became a bishop, was the first person to bring real Christianity to the country, which had been for many years under the sway of the pagan Druids. In spite of their opposition, he travelled across the land, converting and baptizing the heathen and building churches He died peacefully in AD 544 and was buried at St. David's, which is the smallest cathedral city in Britain.

March 1, 1468, was the birthday of William Caxton, to whom we owe the immense blessing of printing.

St. Adrian, Bishop of St. Andrew's in Scotland, was born on March 4, while March 9 is the commemoration day of St. Catherine. March 11 honors St. Joseph of Arimathea, patron of the famous English abbey of Glastonbury which attracts tourists from all over the world.

The date March 15 was formerly known in the old Roman calendar as the Ides, as was the fifteenth day in the months of May, July, March and October. The name 'Ides' means a division (from the Latin) as it divides the months into two parts roughly. The Ides of March is familiar to us all from Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," being the day on which Caesar was assassinated. He had been warned by his wife, Calpurnia, "Beware the Ides of March," as she had been told in a dream of the tragedy to take place that day. But her husband ignored the warning and was stabbed to death by his associates.

The greatest day of the year in Ireland is March 17, which is dedicated to the memory of St. Patrick. The young son of a Roman officer stationed in Britain during the occupation, he was carried off by a band of pirates and sold as a slave to a farmer in Ireland, where he became a cattle herder. During his solitary life in the fields he had time to think, and dedicated his life to God. In a dream he was advised to make his way to the coast, and from there sailed to the Continent where he entered a religious seminary and became a priest. Returning to Ireland, he travelled all over the country baptizing the people and building churches, as he did also in England and Scotland, not giving up his work until he died at the age of 101. The holy man was buried at Downpatrick, which is near the graves of Saints Bridget and Columba.

St. Benedict, remembered by the church on March 21, was born in England, but sent to Rome to be educated. He took up residence in a cavern, now known as the Holy Grotto. He founded several monastic orders, of which that of the Benedictines is the best known. This was established in many countries, including England, where it was introduced by St. Dunstan.

One of the greatest Christian festivals is celebrated on March 25, in commemoration of the message brought by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, and is known as the Annunciation. It is also known as Lady Day, being one of the days in Britain on which tenant farmers pay their rents.

The name of March was given to this month by the Romans in honor of Mars, the god of war, because it came after the long winter, when the war-like Romans did little fighting. With the spring they began organizing their campaigns.

THIS WEEK'S ANAGRAM

How is your vacabulary? There is no better or more fascinating way to improve it than by solving these anagrams each week. Add the letters in the first column to the letters in the second column, and rearrange the letters so as to form a new word. Example: FEND plus SEE equals ???. Answer: DEFENSE. Can you solve the following anagrams?

(1)	RODE	PLUS	BUN	EQUALS	???
(2)	STEM	"	TIN	"	"
(3)	RICE	"	CAM	"	"
(4)	SURE	"	FOP	"	"
(5)	MINE	"	OAR	"	"

Solution to today's anagrams are printed on Page 10.